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HAER No. CA-233-A

NAVAL TRAINING STATION, QUARTERS 1
(Naval Station Treasure Island, Commander's Quarters)
(Naval Station Treasure Island, Nimitz House)
1 Whiting Way, Yerba Buena Island
San Francisco
San Francisco County
California

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Western Region
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

NAVAL TRAINING STATION, QUARTERS 1 (NAVAL STATION TREASURE ISLAND, COMMANDER'S QUARTERS) (NAVAL STATION TREASURE ISLAND, NIMITZ HOUSE)

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Location: 1 Whiting Way, Yerba Buena Island, San Francisco City and County, California
Located on the hillside just to the north of and slightly below the east span of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge, facing east towards Oakland and San Francisco Bay.
UTM Zone 10: 556131, 4185003, USGS 7.5 Quad Oakland West, 1959 (rev.1980)

Significance: Quarters 1 is listed in the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C, in the areas of military history and architecture. The period of significance ranges from 1898 to 1916. Quarters 1 was built in 1900 as the Commander's Residence for the United States Naval Training Station, the only training station on the west coast at the time. It is an unusual example of a U.S. Naval residence in the Classical Revival style, which had become fashionable for private residences in the San Francisco Bay Area in the 1890's, but was not typical of Naval base housing, most of which was built in later periods. The six adjacent Classical Revival Quarters are registered contributors to the designated eligible Senior Officers' Quarters National Register District. They represent all of the major unmodified buildings on the island dating to its use as a Naval Training Station.

Description: Quarters 1 is a Classical Revival, two storey wood frame rectangular house of 5,886 square feet, built on a brick foundation and clad in weatherboard siding. The main central element has a hipped roof with three dormers and is flanked by parapeted wings to each side set back from the front of the main building. The windows on the ground floor in the main section are primarily 1/1 double hung wooden sash with molded architraves with straight, molded cornices, where the wings are primarily solariums with multiple square lights. A three-bay flat roof porch with fluted Doric columns and paneled square columns at the corners is centered on the main facade, with a canopied walkway at the front, and walkways at each side of the porch. A greensward sweeps down the hill from the house and formal gardens are built into the hillside behind the house. The main, ground floor rooms: living room, dining room, study, and central reception hall, have handsome Classical detail and other features such as Ionic Columns. Minor modifications were made after the 1934 fire that damaged the upper floor. The central dormer, originally larger than the other two, was rebuilt to match them, and the porches on the wings were closed in. Quarters 1 and the smaller associated Classical Revival residences are in good condition and retain their historic architectural integrity.

Historical Context:

Quarters 1 was built as part of the initial wave of building construction that established the Naval Training Station, on what was then known as Goat Island in San Francisco Bay, as an active base between 1900 and 1923. Occupied by the Army beginning in 1866, President McKinley in 1898 issued an Executive Order to set aside a "goodly portion" of the island for a Naval Station. The first barracks and the Commander's Quarters were completed in 1900. At the time it was built, the Naval Training Station was one of four such facilities in the United States and the only one on the West Coast. Typically, between four and five hundred trainees were present at the station at any given time.

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Dozens of buildings were constructed there between 1900 and 1923, most have been demolished, but the Senior Officers' Quarters 1-8 still remain in primarily original condition. The Training Station was a key facility for the Navy, ultimately too important to be housed on the limited usable land. During preparations for WWI the Navy developed a second California Training Station in San Diego and the operations at the Yerba Buena site were moved to San Diego in 1923, representing a large step in the transfer of major Navy installations from northern California to San Diego. The island was renamed Yerba Buena Island in 1931, and the third decade saw the construction of the San Francisco- Oakland Bay Bridge Tunnel through its mid-section and construction of Treasure Island on adjacent land fill for the 1939 Worlds Fair and Exposition. After 1923, the Yerba Buena Naval Station and during WWII the Treasure Island Naval Station were used as a Receiving Ship facility. At the end of WWII the entire Yerba Buena Island- Treasure Island Naval Station was severely downsized and re-oriented to an unrelated training facility and all non-residential buildings on Yerba Buena Island were demolished or converted for residential use to serve the training center on Treasure Island. The land was transferred to the City of San Francisco as part of the Military Base Closures in the mid 1990's.

Admiral Chester Nimitz, Commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet during WWII, had full use of Quarters 1 from 1946 and died there in 1966, but his principal residence was in the East Bay, therefore it was not designated under Criterion B, associated with a notable person during its period of significance.

Sources:

Bibliography:

United States Department of the Interior National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Quarters 1, Yerba Buena Island, Naval Training Station, prepared by Sally B. Woodbridge, Architectural Historian.

State of California Department of Parks and Recreation Primary Historic Resource Record and Building, Structure, and Object Record (DPR523A and 523B) for the Naval Station Commander's Quarters and District Record for the Senior Officers' Quarters Historic District, prepared by Stephen D. Mikesell, of JPR Consulting Services for the Navy in 1997. Located at the Office Historic Preservation, Sacramento, California.

Project Information:

This structure is being documented as part of the environmental impact study for the proposed seismic retrofit of the San Francisco- Oakland Bay Bridge because the building is listed and the district has been determined potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and because of its close proximity to the existing bridge retrofit project. Architectural data form prepared by Geraldine Peterson, Architectural Historian, 7/1/1998 under Recordation of the San Francisco- Oakland Bay Bridge, California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), Contract Number 040069, Hansen-Murakami-Eshima, Consultants, Dan Peterson AIA, and Associates, Inc, HAER Consultant.

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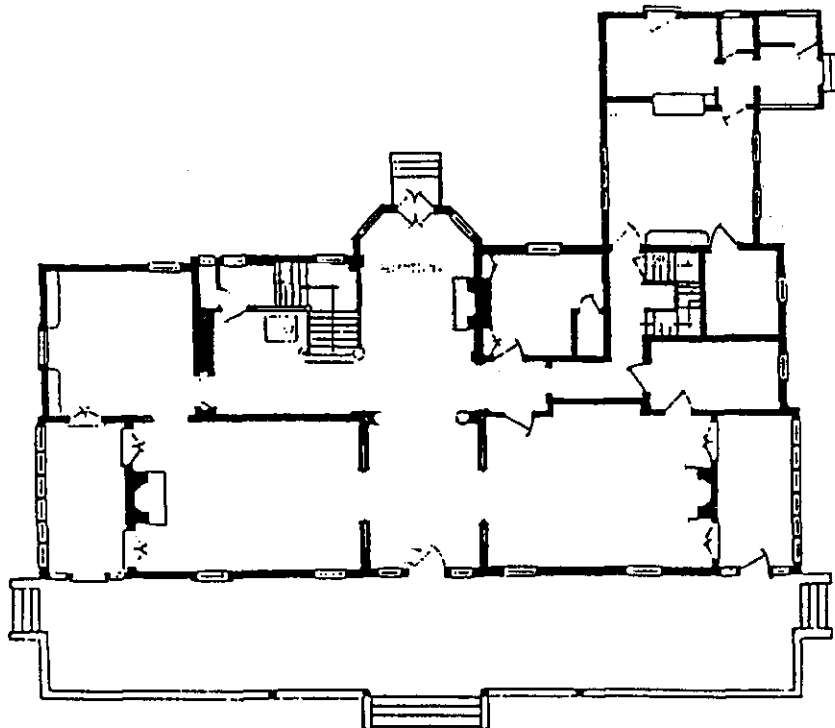
Supplemental Information:

Field snapshots (35mm) taken in 1997 by Dan Peterson, Historical Architect, and Geraldine Peterson, Architectural Historian, recording team members with Dan Peterson AIA, and Associates, Inc. showing the elevations of the building and its setting in relationship to the bridge.

3.5" x 5.5" negatives and prints of Caltrans Photos taken during construction of bridge are located at the Caltrans District 4 Office at 111 Grand Avenue, Oakland, CA



FRONT ELEVATION



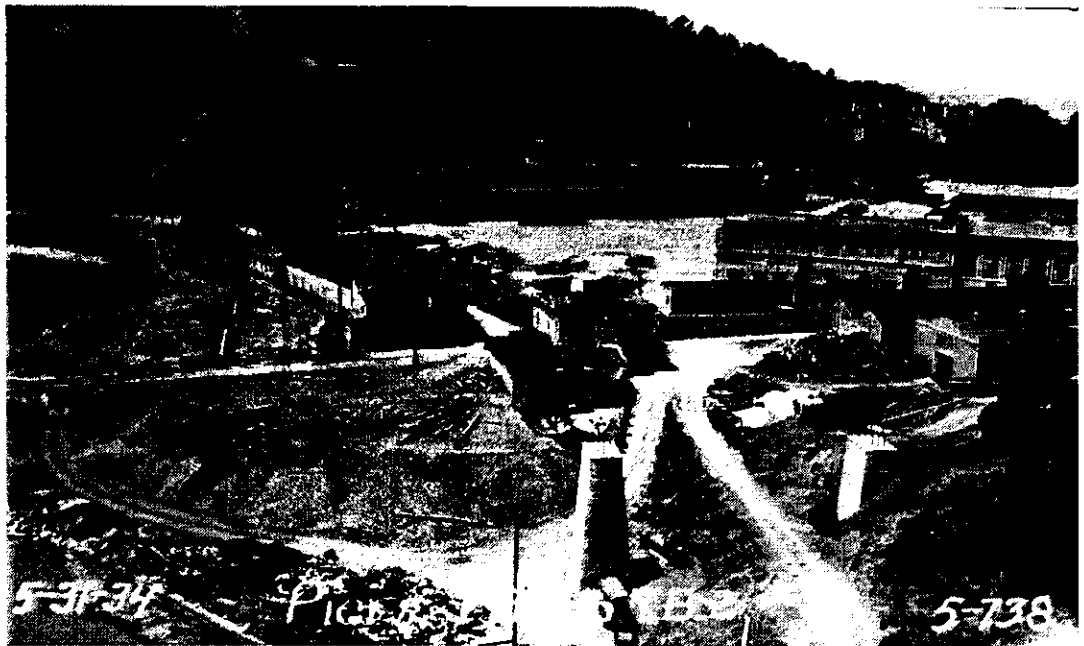
FIRST FLOOR PLAN

Figure 1. Sketch plan and elevation of Quarters 1, Naval Station Commander's Quarters, from the Mikesell Report.

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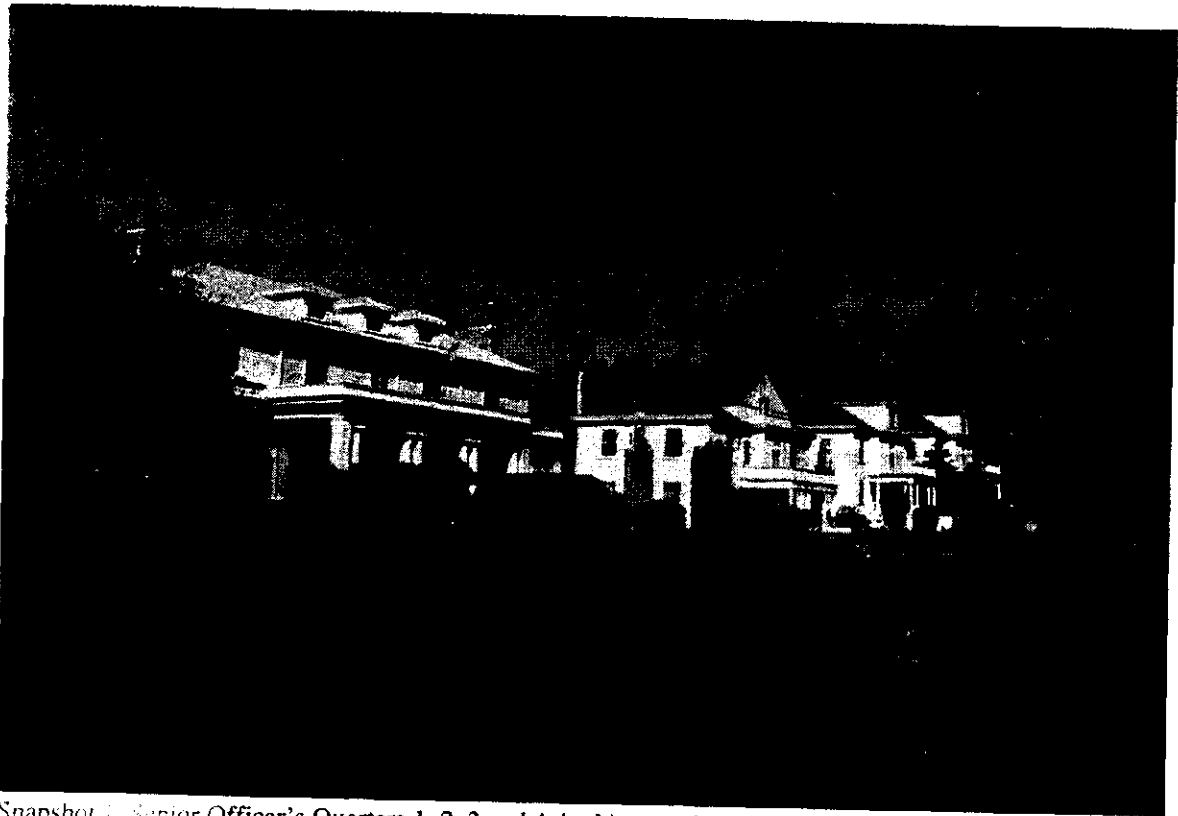


Historic Photo #1. Admiral's Home after fire during bridge construction. Caltrans photo #5-1304 dated 12/6/34

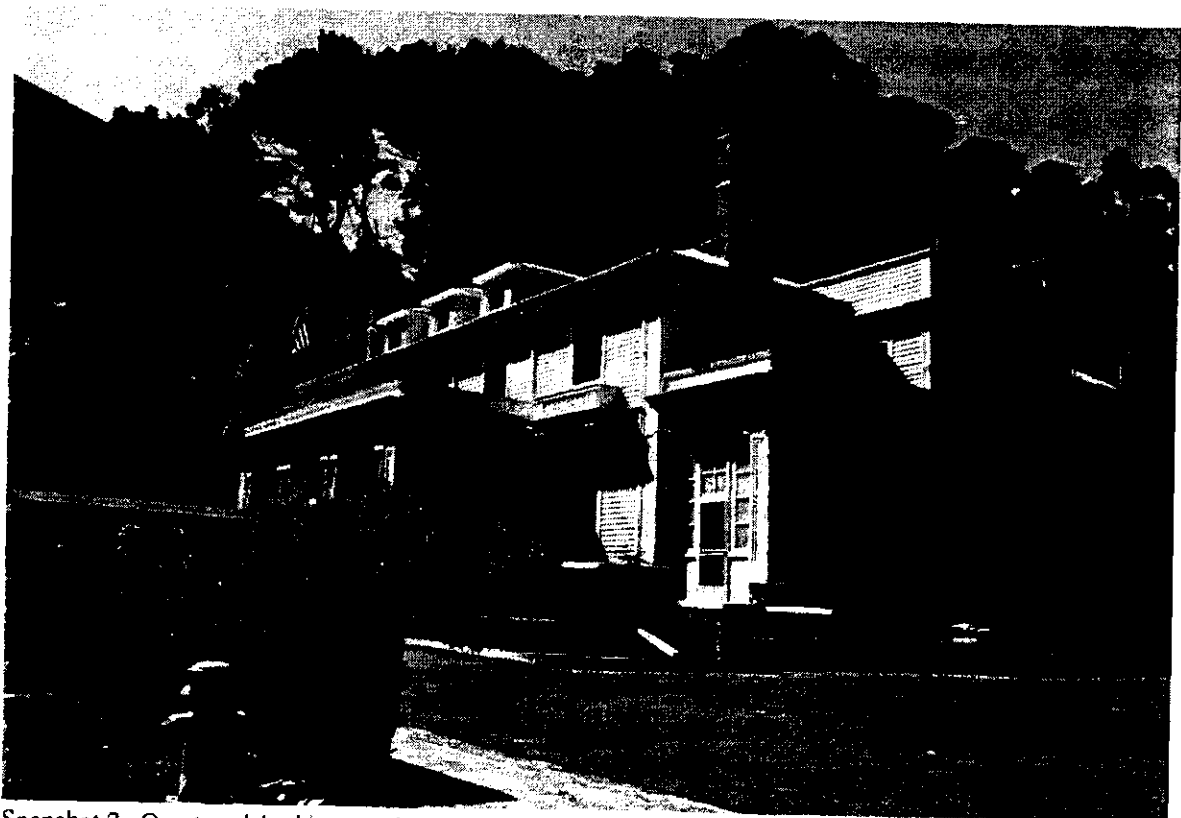


Historic Photo #2. Caltrans Photo 5-738 dated 5/31/34 showing construction of YBI piers 2 and 4, and naval installation buildings around parade grounds. Note Senior Officers Quarters behind greensward, and tennis court in front of Admirals Home.

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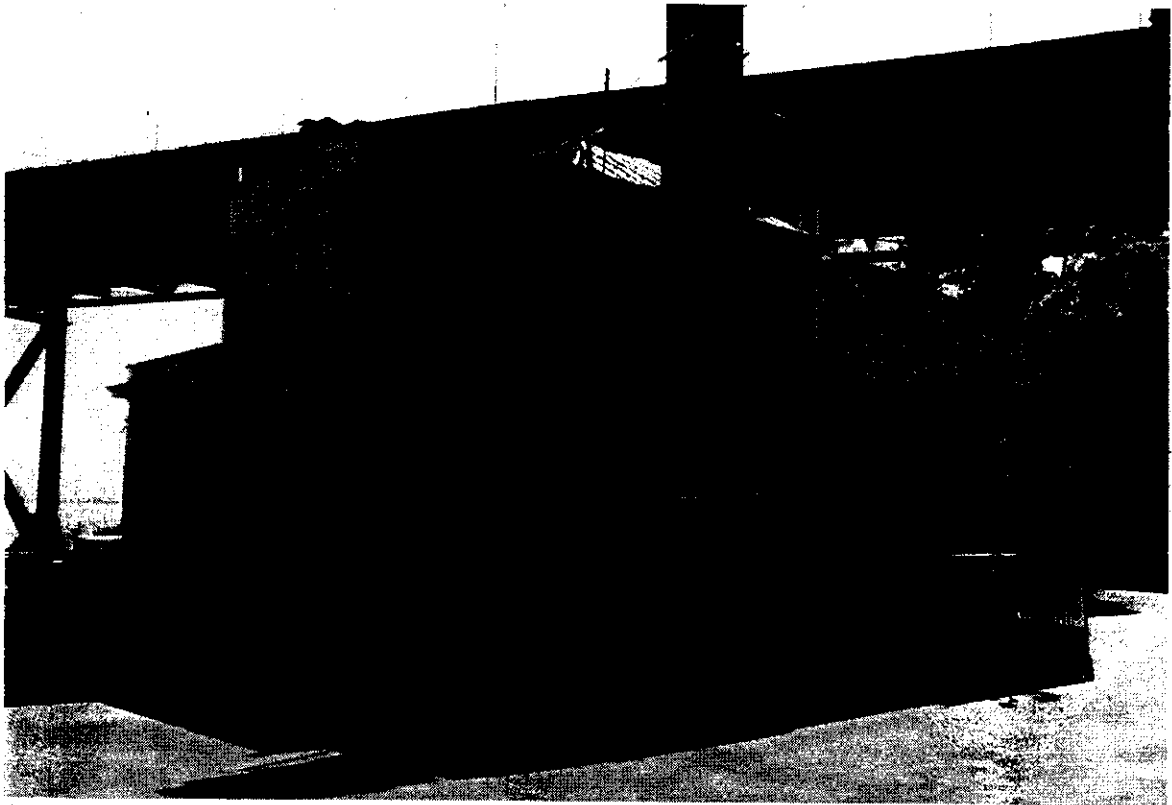


Snapshot 1. Senior Officer's Quarters 1, 2, 3 and 4, looking northwest.



Snapshot 2. Quarters 1 looking southwest with bridge in background.

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Snapshot 3. Rear of Quarters 1 looking southeast, bridge in background.



Snapshot 4. Senior Officers Quarters complex,
looking northwest, Quarters 1 at bottom.